

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 11906

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CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR PEPR PGOV EG IS US

SUBJECT: FONMIN KAMEL REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION OF
PRESIDENT CARTER'S NEW YORK TIMES INTERVIEW

SUMMARY: FONMIN KAMEL SUMMONED ME TODAY, ON SADAT INSTRUCTIONS, TO ADVISE THAT THE PRESIDENT IS UNHAPPY WITH TIMING AND CONTENT OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENT TO NEW YORK TIMES. COMING ON HEELS CHANGE IN EXPECTED AIRCRAFT SUBMISSION PROCEDURE, STATEMENT HAS SHOCKED EGYPTIAN GOVT AND PUBLIC. KAMEL ASKED FOR TEXT AND CLARIFICATIONS, WHICH GOE CAN STUDY AND THEREAFTER MAKE WHATEVER COMMENTS DEEMED NECESSARY. HE ACKNOWLEDGED SOME POINTS IN INTERVIEW ARE KNOWN U.S. POSITIONS, BUT WAS ESPECIALLY DISTURBED ABOUT STATEMENT THAT FUTURE OF WEST BANK/GAZA SHOULD BE SOLVED ON BASIS BEGIN PROPOSAL. LATTER, AS WE KNEW, IS UNACCEPTABLE TO GOE. SADAT HAD PROVIDED HIS COMMENTS ON "NINE POINTS" HAVING TO DO WITH WEST BANK/GAZA SETTLEMENT AND ALSO AGREED TO PROVIDE COUNTERPROPOSAL, WHICH GOE CURRENTLY WORKING ON AND HOPES HAVE READY IN NEXT DAY OR TWO. IN VIEW OF THIS, GOE

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"HURT" AT APPARENT CARTER REENDORSEMENT OF BEGIN PLAN. BEGIN WILL USE IT TO HIS ADVANTAGE. SADAT BELIEVES CARTER STATEMENT WILL HAVE ADVERSE REPERCUSSIONS IN EGYPT AND ARAB WORLD. TOLD KAMEL I HAD NOT RECEIVED TEXT BUT WOULD REQUEST IT AND ANY CLARIFICATIONS. I EMPHASIZED TO KAMEL THAT I KNEW OF NO CHANGE IN USG POLICY TOWARD ARAB/ISRAELI SETTLEMENT, AND SADAT AND HE COULD BE

ASSURED USG STANDS BY ITS PREVIOUS COMMITMENTS TO GOE. ALSO AGAIN EXPLAINED AIRCRAFT SUBMISSION SHIFT IS TACTICAL, PROCEDURAL AND DOES NOT ALTER ADMINISTRATION'S DETERMINATION DO UTMOST TO OBTAIN APPROVAL FOR AIRCRAFT SALES TO EGYPT, SAUDI ARABIA AND ISRAEL. REQUEST NIACT IMMEDIATE TEXT OF CARTER INTERVIEW AND ANY CLARIFICATION THAT MIGHT BE HELPFUL ALLAY EGYPTIAN CONCERNS. END SUMMARY.

1. MET WITH FONMIN KAMEL 1430 TODAY AT HIS REQUEST. AHMED MAHER WAS WITH HIM.

2. KAMEL WAS VISIBLY UPSET. SADAT, HE SAID, IS "VERY UNHAPPY WITH THE TIMING AND CONTEXT OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENT TO THE NEW YORK TIMES AS REPORTED IN AHRAM." (MAHER SUBSEQUENTLY TOLD ME QUESTION HAD BEEN RAISED LAST NIGHT WITH SADAT WHETHER TEXT OF INTERVIEW SHOULD BE PUBLISHED HERE. SADAT, THOUGH UNHAPPY ABOUT TEXT, HAD DECIDED THERE WAS NOTHING TO BE GAINED BY NOT PUBLISHING IT SINCE IT WOULD IN ANY CASE COME OUT.) KAMEL NOTED GOE DOES NOT KNOW WHETHER TEXT PUBLISHED BY AHRAM CORRESPONDS TO WHAT PRESIDENT CARTER ACTUALLY SAID. HE ASKED FOR AUTHORITATIVE TEXT SO THAT GOE CAN STUDY IT AND THEREAFTER MAKE WHATEVER COMMENTS IT DEEMS NECESSARY. BUT, KAMEL KEPT REPEATING, GOE IS "MOST UNHAPPY WITH TIMING AND CONTENTS." COMING ON HEELS SEPARATE AIRCRAFT
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SUBMISSIONS, INSTEAD OF AS PACKAGE AS LONG TOUTED, CARTER STATEMENT HAS BEEN ANOTHER SHOCK TO EGYPTIAN GOVT AND PUBLIC.

3. MANY POINTS IN THE INTERVIEW AS IT APPEARED HERE, KAMEL CONCEDED, ARE KNOWN U.S. POSITIONS, E.G. OPPOSITION TO AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE AND UNWILLINGNESS DEAL WITH PLO UNTIL LATTER RECOGNIZES RIGHT OF ISRAEL TO EXIST. WHAT TROUBLES GOE, HOWEVER, IS THAT PRESIDENT CARTER ALLEGEDLY SAID THAT THE FUTURE OF THE WEST BANK/GAZA SHOULD BE SOLVED ON THE BASIS OF THE BEGIN PROPOSAL AND, ACCORDING TO AHRAM ACCOUNT, PRESIDENT CARTER EVEN USED SOME OF EXPRESSIONS THAT BEGIN HAD USED, E.G. ARAB PALESTINIANS."

4. WHEN ATHERTON WAS RECENTLY HERE, KAMEL RECALLED, PRESIDENT SADAT AND HE HAD INDICATED THAT GOE CANNOT ACCEPT BEGIN PROPOSAL FOR WEST BANK/GAZA. SADAT HAD PROVIDED HIS COMMENTS ON THE "NINE POINTS" HAVING TO DO WITH THE WEST BANK/GAZA SETTLEMENT. GOE HAD ALSO AGREED TO PROVIDE A COUNTERPROPOSAL FOR THE WEST BANK/GAZA, WHICH IT IS CURRENTLY WORKING ON. KAMEL SAID HE HOPES

PROVIDE THAT COUNTERPROPOSAL IN NEXT DAY OR SO FOR
PRESIDENT CARTER'S USE ONLY AT THIS TIME, BUT FOR LATER
PRESENTATION TO BEGIN. WHAT "HURT" GOE, ACCORDING KAMEL,
IS THAT CARTER STATEMENT SEEMING TO ENDORSE BEGIN PLAN AS
BASIS FOR SETTLEMENT SHOULD COME OUT NOW.

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

5. KAMEL ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT PRESIDENT CARTER'S
ALLEGED STATEMENT THAT WITHDRAWAL NEED NOT BE TO THE 67
BORDERS. HE RECALLED IT IS GOE'S CLEAR UNDERSTANDING,
MOST RECENTLY REITERATED DURING THE ATHERTON VISIT, THAT
USG BELIEVES BORDER RECTIFICATIONS SHOULD TAKE PLACE ONLY
ON WEST BANK AND THAT THESE SHOULD BE MINOR AS PUBLICLY
ARTICULATED BY PRESIDENT CARTER LAST YEAR. PRESIDENT
CARTER'S GENERAL FORMULATION, IF CORRECTLY REPORTED,
LEAVES OPEN POSSIBILITY ISRAELIS MAY DEMAND BORDER CHANGES
ON ALL FRONTS.

6. SADAT, KAMEL CONTINUED, BELIEVES THAT PRESIDENT
CARTER'S STATEMENT WILL HAVE "VERY BAD REPERCUSSIONS HERE
AND IN ALL OF THE ARAB WORLD." SADAT HAD INSTRUCTED KAMEL
TO REITERATE TO WASHINGTON, THROUGH ME, THAT THE BEGIN
PROPOSAL "IS COMPLETELY UNACCEPTABLE TO EGYPT. ANY
SOLUTION BASED ON IT WILL GET US NOWHERE." IT SHOULD BE
CLEAR THAT ANY TRANSITIONAL PERIOD WILL LEAD TO SELF-
DETERMINATION, ALTHOUGH GOE RECOGNIZES THAT ISRAEL'S
SECURITY NEEDS DICTATE EVENTUAL WEST BANK/GAZA FEDERATION
OR CONFEDERATION WITH JORDAN.

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7. WHAT MAKES MATTERS WORSE, KAMEL COMPLAINED, IS BEGIN'S WARM WELCOME OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S ALLEGED INTERVIEW. BEGIN MAY BE EXPECTED TO USE THE INTERVIEW IN SUPPORT OF HIS POSITIONS. KAMEL APPEALED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER FIND SOME APPROPRIATE WAY TO CLARIFY THE STATEMENTS IN THE INTERVIEW. A WEST BANK/GAZA SETTLEMENT, KAMEL INSISTED, SHOULD BE GOVERNED BY INTERNATIONAL PRINCIPLES, THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER PROVISION RE SELF-DETERMINATION AND ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, NOT SIMPLY BY THE BEGIN PLAN. THE LATTER, HE REPEATED, IS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE TO EGYPT AND THE ARAB WORLD. HE URGED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER MAKE THIS CLEAR TO BEGIN IN UPCOMING BEGIN TALKS.

8. TOLD KAMEL THAT I HAD NOT RECEIVED TEXT OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S INTERVIEW, HENCE I COULD NOT COMMENT ON SPECIFICS THAT HE HAD MENTIONED. I AGREED ASK FOR TEXT AND ANY CLARIFICATION THAT MIGHT BE OFFERED. IN MEANTIME, I EMPHASIZED TO KAMEL THAT I KNEW OF NO RPT NO CHANGE IN USG POLICY TOWARD ARAB/ISRAELI SETTLEMENT AND THAT I THOUGHT BOTH PRESIDENT SADAT AND HE COULD BE ASSURED THAT USG STANDS BY ALL OF ITS PREVIOUS COMMITMENTS TO GOE IN TRYING TO MOVE AHEAD ON PROBLEM. ON AIRCRAFT SUBMISSIONS, I RECALLED WE HAD DISCUSSED THIS PREVIOUS EVENING AND REITERATED CHANGE IS TACTICAL, PROCEDURAL IN NATURE AND IN NO WAY CHANGES ADMINISTRATION'S DETERMINATION OBTAIN AGREEMENT FOR AIRCRAFT SALES TO EGYPT, SAUDI ARABIA AND ISRAEL. KAMEL SAID HE ACCEPTED THIS, BUT MAN IN THE STREET KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT U.S. EXECUTIVE/LEGISLATIVE DIFFERENCES AND SEES WHAT HAPPENED AS A RETREAT.

9. WHEN I LEFT KAMEL, I TOLD ASSEMBLED PRESSMEN KAMEL HAD ASKED FOR TEXT AND CLARIFICATIONS, THAT I DID NOT
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HAVE TEXT, BUT THAT I AGREED ASK FOR IT AND WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH FONMIN AGAIN IN NEXT DAY OR SO.

10. COMMENT: EGYPTIANS FROM SADAT ON DOWN ARE GREATLY EXERCISED ABOUT CONTENTS AND TIMING OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S INTERVIEW. COINCIDENCE WITH SHIFT IN AIRCRAFT SUBMISSION PROCEDURE HEIGHTENS CONCERNS. WOULD BE HELPFUL HAVE NIACT IMMEDIATE FULL TEXT OF INTERVIEW, WHEN IT IS SCHEDULED TO APPEAR, AND ANY CLARIFICATIONS THAT DEPT MAY

BE ABLE TO PROVIDE TO ALLAY AFOREMENTIONED EGYPTIAN
CONCERNS. EILTS

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